

October 11th, 1939

NOTES

Farm Security Administration

1. Notes for discussion with Dr. Odum and staff.
2. Shooting Script on "The Small Town".
3. Notes for study on Subregional Area.
4. Notes on "New Role Of Camera And Photograph". [Not in File 9/84]

FOR DISCUSSION WITH DR. ODUM AND STAFF:

- I     Negatives of Tobacco Festival taken by independent photographer.
- II    Prints for people in field.
- III   Industrial photographs.
  - Use.
  - Releases.
- IV    Photographic study of small towns.
  - Rural (completely, if possible).
  - More urbanized - some industry (detailed script to be prepared).
- V     Photographic study of one large town - Durham.
  - (Detailed script to be prepared.)

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PROCESSES AND EVENTS TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED WITHIN  
DEFINITE TIME PERIODS:

Period I -- October 15-December 1:

Tobacco grading - "stripping".

Tobacco selling and associated happenings:

Loading and hauling tobacco to market.

Unloading at warehouse.

Auction.

Banking proceeds (or at least the landlord's share).

Spending the money.

Solicitation in striphouse the next day by agents.

Plowing for wheat.

Corn shucking.

Baling hay.

Thrashing of peas and soybeans.

Produce stored in tobacco barns.

School bus transportation of children.

Period II -- December 1-March 1:

**Cutting wood for tobacco.**

Burning off and preparing seed beds (January).

Other burning off ditch banks - shrubbing.

Killing hogs.

Breaking up land.

Hunting.

Christmas shopping.

Christmas tree celebrations.

Part I

1.    C.    b.    stables, barns, tobacco barns, etc., single buildings and panoramas of groupings; contrasts in number of buildings on individual farms; difference in style and uses of buildings in, say, Wake and Rockingham Counties.
- c.    Farm machinery, tools: Close-up to show detail (for ex., different sorts of plows for different uses, dump carts, ox-carts, Hoover carts (if any); disposition of such machinery and tools, standing around rusting, and put away under shelters. Contrast amounts of machinery and tools on different farms.
2.    Processes and Processors:  
     Detail pictures of the processes to show plants where special judgement comes in. For example, when to give special type of tending, when to harvest, etc., showing persons for types and clothing, etc; and show "folk ways".
  - A.    Follow crops through the year with pictures showing all distinct stages and treatments.
  - B.    Special processes: hog killing (many processes), home canning, taking honey, making cider, barn raising, corn shucking, etc.
3.    Life and Leisure:
  - A.    Daily household processes to show kitchens, cooking, dining-rooms, and family eating, sweeping (house and yards), to show types of people, clothing, interiors, furnishings, tools, implements, and equipment.
  - B.    Family, group and community recreational and community activities; parties, picnics, "dinner-on-the-grounds", hunting, fishing (Negro on creek bank, hand seining, fishing for shad with bows, etc.), rural sports - boys' old field baseball, etc.

Pictures of the farm should be taken in detail to show clearly significant things about the machine or tool process, even if too close to show more than the worker's hands; then father off to show person for type and dress. These two sets should be taken at sufficient distance to show scenic effects and the feeling of space on a farm - or lonesomeness, as the case may be. The notes to accompany the pictures should be made carefully and should cover such things as the estimated yield of pictures' crops, weight of hogs, etc; comments about

processes that involve special skill, as when to plant or plow, grading tobacco, etc.

They should also contain information about type of farm, general income group, dates taken and anything that would be helpful in assimilating the pictures into different series, such as through the year with some crop; through the year with all the varied things a farmer of different types has to do; comparisons of Negroes and whites, of landlord and tenant, way of doing things, and their equipment.

## Part II - Industry

### 1. The Factory, Its Processes and Workers:

- A. Exterior views of typical factories to show style of building, care of yards.
- B. Interior general views to show cramped quarters or spaciousness, whether light and airy or dark and dull.
- C. Machines with workers at work - not just standing by them, some to show full machines and others in detail to show manipulations of the process. Brief description of the processes with emphasis on the duties of the workers, operations they perform, degree of skill necessary, at the various critical points in the process, if any; the comparative freedom of tending to automatic machines as compared with semi-automatic.
- D. The workers: Care should be exercised in taking the pictures mentioned under C to get all types of workers but if best pictures for processes and skills do not cover them, then some should be made to show workers on jobs for which they are the typical operatives: girls, boys, young men and women, older men and women, Negroes, etc. Care should also be exercised to be sure the different varieties are covered, semi-dressed jobs, overalls, aprons, workers with flat bedroom slippers, heads tied up, uniformed workers, as in cigarette factories.

### 2. The industrial town:

This series of pictures could be very valuable if well selected and large enough. The whole question has been full of controversy - so much taking of the worst and best for critical and defense purposes - that a complete, unbiased collection would be very revealing.

- A. Company towns:

## Part II

2. A. a. Some general scenic effects and street scenes to show variety or monotony of houses, general upkeep, type of street or surfacing and sidewalks, wells or pumps, rows of toilets, garages, etc.
- b. Individual houses of all types with dates built. This subject or series alone will make an interesting little study in the changes of style of mill houses - from log cabins to cottages; to square-roofed houses; to varied bungalows. Care should be taken to get typical examples of planting - shrubs, flower yards, lawns, bare swept yards, parched up garages and chicken houses.

Pictures of houses owned by operatives adjacent to the company houses for comparison in layout, upkeep, etc.

### B. Non-company towns.

Same general aspects as noted under A. Care should be taken to get the street scenes and individual houses in different sections housing workers: Negro and white slums up to better class skilled home-owning workers.

## 3. Life and Leisure:

- A. Daily processes showing interiors: kitchens, and cooking; dining-rooms and family eating; living-rooms, etc., to show furnishings, equipment, type of tools and instruments, utensils. These could be used to compare with the rural series. Pigs, chickens, cows, in typical setting, person collecting "slops" from neighbors for pigs.
- B. Family group, community and recreational activities of individual and company initiation; boys - gangs and Boy Scouts; drug-stores, and barber-shop gatherings.

Those of company initiation should show buildings and equipment, regular activities and festival, gala affairs.

## Part III

### General notes:

Pictures of industry should cover the principal industries in the 13-County

Part III

area and as many of the **smaller ones** as are fairly common. They should be accompanied by full notes and so catalogued that any type of pictures can be selected to show comparisons and cross-sections as, for example, living conditions in different industries, or to compare with farm or similar economic levels.

N.B. Miss Lange does not consider this a very good outline. Too much emphasis on the economic setup, not enough on the people at the center of it. Also, various motions and processes should be shown by movies, and not stills.

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October 11th, 1939

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## THE SMALL TOWN

### Suggestions for a Documentary Photographic Study of the Small Town in America:

The ideal manner to conduct this experiment in photo-documentation would be to concentrate on a series of carefully selected towns of about 5,000 population. These would be cross-roads towns representative of the geographical area in which they are situated.

Certain questions come to mind when considering such a project. Is there a social and economic pattern common to these towns of 5,000?

Does the fact that most of the people of the United States listen to the same radio programs, see the same movies and are subject to national advertising campaigns, mean that a town in Alabama is indistinguishable from one in Vermont or in Montana? What are the common denominators of life in these towns? Can they be significantly portrayed with the camera?

Such an elaborate plan to document life in the American small town is not now within our sphere of activity. We can, However, make the attempt to look for a set of "common denominators" in the smaller towns which are encountered during the coming months in the field.

The following check outline is presented in the hope that it may be of help in finding these common denominators.

Our photo-documentation will be of a decided random sort. The photographer cannot stop to make an elaborate social and economic survey of the particular town he decides to "photograph". Our pictures can throw an interesting light on the smaller towns of America.



A check outline for photo-documentation:

I On the street:

A General views of the main street (or streets). Choose these shots carefully to give an "over all" sense of the town.

B Buildings (representative) - Close-up shots of the more important buildings - these should include whole fronts, windows, doors.

- a. stores
- b. theaters
- c. churches
- d. garages
- e. shops - barber, shoe, etc.
- f. restaurants
- g. hotels
- h. public buildings - town hall, jail (cooler - calaboose)  
fire house, etc.

1. details of the above - fire escapes, balconies, special signs, details of façades, awnings, etc.

C People on the street. Let these be quite representative. These shots should show faces, clothing, and activities.

- a. men loafing and talking
- b. "Saturday afternoon"
- c. window shopping
- d. women and children waiting for the men
- e. men and women coming out of the stores with bundles and packages - e.g., in country towns men carrying tools and harness out of hardware store.
- f. women pushing baby carriages

D On the walk - non-personal

- a. sidewalk displays
- b. fire hydrants
- c. traffic signs
- d. curb signs
- e. crossings
- f. hitching posts
- g. tree-lined streets (N. J. elm-lined streets)

E Street traffic

- a. cars and trucks - parked and in transit
- b. wagons and horses
- c. sprinkler wagons
- d. street cleaners
- e. loads on or in trucks - to show the nature of the products grown or produced in the neighborhood, e.g., corn, potatoes, cattle, hogs, cord wood, etc.

- f. waiting for busses and street cars
- g. traffic signals

## II Stores - Make Photos In Various Types of Stores:

- A Outside window displays and signs.
- B Inside - counters, goods on tables, shelves, and racks. Note the class of goods on tables, shelves, and obtain good photos of characteristic items, e.g., "patent medicines".
- C Clerks - close-ups - how they dress.
- D People being served.
- E Posters and other ads.

## III Theatres:

- A Front view - details of ticket booth, displays, person selling tickets - note signs in ticket g booths (box office), groups buying tickets, looking at displays.

## IV Banks:

- A Outside views.
  - 1. people looking out of windows
  - 2. signs on the windows
- B Inside views
  - 1. people working in the bank - close-ups
  - 2. interesting views might be obtained showing the activity in a small country bank - the "banker" interviewing a farmer.
- C Equipment

## V Other:

- A Restaurants and cafes.
  - 1. shots of windows showing menus and "specials" listed on window.
  - 2. interesting pictures could be obtained showing counters, tables, slot machines, cigar case, menus, and posters on wall.
  - 3. people and groups eating at counters and tables.
  - 4. People who work in restaurant.
  - 5. (Get picture of the sign, SHORT ORDERS on restaurant windows.)
- B Ice cream parlors.
- C Shoe shops.

- D Harness shops.
- E Barber shops.
- F Hardware and drug stores.
  - 1. a good set of photographs of people at counter and clerks dispensing.
- G Notion store.
- H Seed and feed store - get a good set of interior pictures.
- I Pool halls.
- J Saloons and beer parlors.
- K Funeral parlors.
  - 1. pictures of funerals.
  - 2. crepe on door.
  - 3. processions.
  - 4. burials.
- L Millinery shop.
- M Shoe-shine parlors.

VI Hotel:

- A Outside pictures
  - 1. close-ups of people on porch.
  - 2. cars parked in front.
- B Lobby pictures.
  - 1. desk.
  - 2. people sitting around (close-ups).
  - 3. signs and posters on wall.
- C Dining-rooms.
- D Display room where travelling men display their goods.  
Watch for a display and get a good picture of local merchants looking over goods.

VII Garage:

The garage has taken the place of the livery stable as the meeting place of the town loafers, and the "men-about-town". Very interesting pictures could be obtained in and about the garage.

- 1. signs.
- 2. oil barrels.

VIII Filling Stations:

A good set of pictures may be taken over an interval of time; would

give some idea of the "life" which passes through the town.  
This may also be a good "town meeting place".

IX The People Of The Town At Their Work:

(Pictures of the people of the town and what they do.)

1. editor of the local paper.
2. town Marshall.
3. postman or rural mail carrier.
4. butcher.
5. plumber.
6. barber.
7. druggist filling prescriptions.
8. blacksmith.
9. filling station attendant.
10. harness maker.
11. clerks.
12. doctor (and his office).
13. lawyer (and his office).
14. and others.

X Transportation:

- A The railroad station (see special shooting script).
- B The bus terminal. " " " "
- C Street cars.
- D Automobiles.

XI Church:

- A People going to church.
- B People coming out of a church.
- C People visiting after church.
- D Inside pictures during services (if possible).
- E Buildings.
  1. the church.
  2. the parsonage.
  3. church schools.
  4. building details.

XII Lodges:

- A Lodge halls.
- B Signs and window displays.
- C Lodge celebrations.

**XIII The Square - The Common - Center Of Town:**

Anything of special interest such as the band stand, confort stations, fire bell, bulletin boards, etc.

A view looking down on the square on Saturday afternoons or special occasions, where there are lots of cars parked would be most revealing.

**XIV Country Club:**

A good set of pictures of the small town country club - the people who go to the club, and how they amuse themselves.

**XV Recreation:**

As complete a record of recreation as is possible.

1. baseball - the ball grounds.
2. local football.
3. children at play, organized and unorganized.
4. picnics.
5. golf.
6. tennis.
7. swimming - the "swimmin' hole"
8. special and local games.

**XVI Special Celebrations:**

1. farmers' picnics.
2. lodge celebrations.
3. national and local holidays.
4. special local celebrations.

**XVII Schools:**

- A Special schools.
- B Public schools.
1. the buildings, inside and out.
  2. the teachers.
  3. the pupils.
    - a. at work.
    - b. at play.
    - c. going to school.
    - d. leaving school.

**XVIII Homes:**

A small but selected set of outside photographs of homes. Show the better type of home area and the area where the poorer people live.

- A. Types of homes.
- B Front yards.
- C Backyards.

D "Down by the tracks".

E A set of pictures of the inside of representative homes.

1. fittings.
2. furniture.
3. decorations.
4. bric-a-brac.
5. curtains.
6. pictures.
7. mantels.

F

Home in the evenings. How do people spend their evenings?  
A varied set of pictures taken in homes of different income levels.

1. eating. - cooking.
2. dress.
3. listening to the radio.
4. bridge or other games.
5. playing with children.
6. parties - guests.
7. sewing - sewing-machines.
8. care of baby.

**XIX Local Industry:**

What keeps the town going?

As far as time permits, a study of local industries would be of great value.

**XX Utilities:**

A Water system.

B Light and power.

C Sewage disposal.

D Telephone and telegraph.

**XXI Government:**

A City Hall.

1. outside pictures.
  - a. the building.
  - b. people "hanging around".
2. inside pictures.
  - a. doors - signs painted on doors.
  - b. inside offices

B

B Court House.

1. inside and outside pictures (see above).
2. "court day".

C Fire house.

D Library.

- E Town meetings.
1. campaigning.
  2. political rallies and parades (signs and placards).
  3. election day.
    - a. voting.
    - b. standing around polling places.

XXII Miscellaneous:

1. firebells, alarms, or signals.
2. hitching racks.
3. signs.
  - a. traffic.
  - b. welcome
  - c. service club.
  - d. tourist.
  - e. general signs.
4. waste dumps.
5. delivery of newspapers.
6. elevators in buildings (especially old ones).
7. man or woman working in garden or mowing lawn.
8. people sitting on porch.
9. women visiting "over backyard fence".
10. washing on lines in backyards.
11. raking or burning leaves.
12. dogs running around streets.
13. the cemetery.
14. vacant lots.
15. street peddlers.
16. unpaved streets - mud holes.
17. "the edge of town" - where town and country meet (a difficult thing to show).
18. "getting the mail".
19. "shack town" - try to get pictures of each town's slum.
20. hitching racks for teams and horses on a back street.

REVISED AS OF MAY 2, 1939

## ADDITIONS TO SMALL TOWN SHOOTING SCRIPT

### Service Clubs:

Rotary  
Kiwanis  
Civitan  
Lions  
Etc.

Signs entering towns.

Signs in hotel lobbies.

At meetings.

A series of pictures taken at some of the luncheons.

General shot of the whole group.

Special pictures.

the presiding officer

members singing

close-up of different members.

### Library:

The librarian at his (her) desk.

Youths and older people selecting books from shelves.

Youths and older people reading at tables.

Closeups of special things:

bulletin board

newspaper racks

top of librarian's desk

shelf of special books.

### General Items For The Summer:

Picnics

Fourth of July

Labor Day

other holidays

farmers

speakers

The attending farmers - photos from a point back of or near the speaker's platform.

Close-up of farmers (individuals and groups) before and after the regular meetings.

Eating - usually in groups.

Children - what do they do at the picnic?



Mothers and babies.

Races and other events.

Parked cars.

Horse-drawn vehicles.

Revivals:

Tent

Open aor.

Sitting On The Front Porch:

Mowing The Lawn.

Additional Miscellaneous Suggestions To Be Noted For Photographing The  
Sub-Region:

Towns and Cities:

Store fronts, and windows, and general:

- (a) Get pictures with windows having prices and food items either on printed sheets or lettered on with white letters. These are important records of items consumed in a given neighborhood and current prices of the same.
- (b) Windows displaying articles currently purchased - e.g., hardware store with display of small tools, harness, etc.
- (c) "Ten-cent" stores; x variety stores.
- (d) Second-hand stores/
- (e) Feed, seed, and fertilizer stores.

Stores Inside:

Carefully chosen pictures showing stocks, customers purchasing, clerks.

Houses:

Get some lower middle-class houses - outside views. (In Raleigh and Durham I noted a very characteristic porch with brick pillars - full and half.)

Edge Of Town:

Coming into town on main highways or leaving town on same highways.

Housing In The Country:

Work on type-houses; log, frame, or other.

Get detail pictures of the construction of each. Note particularly the log houses.

Watch for the building of a log house: Get details of all operations. If at all possible, this should start in the woods with the cutting of the logs and include every operation x until the family moves in. This can be a most useful series.

Interiors:

Construction, partitions, doors, windows, curtains, furniture.

Household Operations:

An interesting series might be done of one of the country women preparing a meal. This might include:

- (a) getting wood,
- (b) carrying water,
- (c) going to the garden,
- (d) preparing food,
- (e) building a fire,
- (f) cooking,
- (g) setting table,
- (h) getting food to the table,
- (i) family eating,
- (j) washing dishes.

This series might be extended to include the many tasks which a farm woman performs during the turn of the season:

- (a) canning,
- (b) gardening,
- (c) caring for animals and poultry,
- (d) cooking,
- (e) baking,
- (f) sewing.

Schools:

School busses.

School interiors.

Children going to and returning from school.

Special holiday celebrations in the schools.

Holidays And Sundays:

Going to church.

- (a) people visiting after church.
- (b) a series of pictures of a complete church service - all that is photographable - would be most interesting (doubtful in one could get such a set).

Sunday at home.

- (a) The "gathering of the clan" for Sunday dinner and visiting.
- (b) men and boys looking at the livestock and crops.
- (c) women cooking, getting food to table, washing dishes, and visiting.

"A mile of road". A careful photographic inventory of what lies on either side of this mile of highway - houses, bridges, gates, fences, sign boards, fields, trees. (I don't know whether such an idea is feasible or not. It was suggested by both Miss Herrin and Mrs. Hagood, Might be worth thinking about. The detail will have to be worked out carefully.)

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October 30, 1939

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